

VZCZCXRO5740
PP RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0537/01 0950942
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 050942Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6732
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000537

SIPDIS

AIDAC
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR - BEIDA, WEST DARFUR - LIVING ON THE EDGE

KHARTOUM 00000537 001.2 OF 002

Summary

¶1. (U) On March 14, the first USAID team to visit Beida, West Darfur, in more than 16 months traveled to the border town with representatives of the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) to monitor humanitarian programs and assess current conditions. Travel to the area had not been permitted previously due to insecurity along the Chad-Sudan border. The USAID team found that the situation in the town and internally displaced person (IDP) camp had stabilized since the January 18 pre-emptive draw down of relocatable staff triggered by the build up of Chadian armed opposition groups in the area. On February 18, expatriate humanitarian staff returned to Beida and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are in the process of scaling up programs to pre-December levels. However, armed opposition group movements, tensions between dominant Arab groups and the local population, and strained relations between Arab leaders and humanitarian agencies present challenges to emergency relief efforts. End summary.

Background

¶2. (U) Humanitarian activities in the southwestern corridor of West Darfur have suffered frequent program suspensions due to insecurity in the border region. Beida's proximity to the Chad-Sudan border has exposed it to repeated cross-border shelling and combatant movements from Sudan in to Chad, resulting in four staff relocations of NGO personnel since November 2006. The temporary establishment of five Chadian armed opposition group camps, comprised of an estimated 40 vehicles, represented the latest security threat responsible for the January 18 evacuation of expatriate staff.

¶3. (U) Three international agencies, Tearfund, Medair, and Save the Children/US (SC/US) support a combined IDP, Chadian refugee, and host community population of 20,000 individuals in Beida. Through implementing partner Tearfund, USAID nutrition and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs supplement nutrition to 170 malnourished children monthly, educate 6,000 children biweekly on improved hygiene practices, and provide access to clean water for the general population. DFID-funded Medair health programming

provides health care services to approximately 110 people daily and the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) delivers emergency food assistance through implementing partner SC/US to approximately 20,000 people per month. In addition, humanitarian agencies provide health and food support to Chadians who cross the border in to Beida in search of services and then return to Chad. Agencies on the ground hypothesize that increased insecurity and a general lack of basic services in eastern Chad account for the population movements.

Humanitarian Assistance in the Face of Obstacles

¶4. (U) Despite the erratic presence of agencies on the ground in Beida, humanitarian programming has continued due in large part to the continued engagement of Tearfund's Sudanese staff in health, hygiene, and nutrition support programs and the commercial transport of medical supplies for the Medair-operated clinic. Along the southwest corridor of West Darfur, ongoing USAID programs provide essential services to more than 100,000 individuals. However, insecurity has prevented the transport of drilling rigs to the area, delaying efforts to improve access to water.

Strained Relations with Arab Groups

¶5. (U) Relations between humanitarian agencies and dominant Arab groups in Beida are strained. USAID officers met with the local emir, Ahmed Douai, and 14 sheikhs who predominantly represent Arab nomads. (Note: The emir and 12 of the sheikhs are of Chadian origin and entered Beida with the sheikh's brother, Mohammed Douai, during the 1984-85 drought and later settled in the area in the 1990s. The Arab sheikhs are economically and politically dominant over the local population. End note.) Arab leaders have requested additional water points across the locality and a school for IDPs. The sheikhs would like to construct a water tower in Beida to promote the additional settlement of nomads in the area. However, an

KHARTOUM 00000537 002.2 OF 002

environmental assessment conducted by Tearfund indicated that the water table would not be able to sustain the project.

Willing Participants for Relocation Decline

¶6. (U) In response to insecurity along the Chad-Sudan border, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supports a voluntary relocation program for Chadian refugees from the border area to Um Shalaya refugee camp near Mornei, West Darfur. However, the number of refugee families willing to relocate has steadily declined across the region. As of March 13, the number of families in Ararah willing to relocate had declined from 200 to 126 and from 147 to 83 in Beida. The reason for the decline is unclear, but humanitarian agencies believe that some refugees have begun to return to Chad, although accurate information regarding the return environment in eastern Chad is difficult to obtain.

Comment

¶7. (U) The reliability and capacity of humanitarian activities along the Chad-Sudan border are intricately connected to the cross-border security situation. Movements of armed groups and manipulation of the social and political structure through the importation and entrenchment of Arab Chadian groups and the destruction of villages pose significantly challenges to the targeting and provision of humanitarian assistance in Beida locality. End comment.

HUME